

## Prologue

*Ad multos annos....*

Archaeology has a long history in Denmark and one of its foremost and most enduring concepts is Christian Jürgensen Thomsen's (1788–1865) division of prehistoric material into Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age periods. Thomsen presented his ideas in a paper titled 'Brief Review of the Monuments and Antiquities from ancient times in Scandinavia' (Kortfattet Udsigt over Mindesmærker og Oldsager fra Nordens Fortid) in the book 'Guide to Scandinavian Archaeology' (Ledetraad til nordisk Oldkyndighed). The Danish version was published in 1836 and was already translated into German by 1837.

Thomsen's springboard was the establishment of 'The Royal Commission for the Preservation of Antiquities' which, with its roots in the royal collections, was the forerunner of the existing National Museum of Denmark. Not only were his ideas practiced in the museum, but their publication in both domestic and international fora, made it possible for contemporary scholars to understand, discuss and criticize them. And this is how it should be; archaeology embraces both prehistory and the middle ages, the renaissance and modern times with archaeologists working both on dry land and underwater. Furthermore, for over 100 years the collaboration between the natural and conservation sciences and archaeology as well as between the archaeological museums and the universities has been mutually rewarding.

As most of today's excavations are triggered by construction projects, it is often these that determine where we excavate and how. It is thus even more important that all archaeological activities are built upon on a common, long-term research strategy in collaboration with the archaeological museums and ensuring that both research excavations and construction-led excavations produce high quality results to an international standard.

One of the consequences of the latest Museum Act, effective from 1 January 2013, is the reduction of the total number of Danish archaeological museums to 27 viable units which can deliver relevant research. The research quality should be equal to the highest international standards, a focussed effort should be made to attract

international researchers and projects should be grounded in frontline research questions. International research assessments for both 2009 and 2013 have emphasized a need for additional research in both terrestrial and marine archaeology in Denmark.

One of the ways in which we can promote these objectives is with this journal. Made possible by financial support from The Danish Agency for Culture, the *Danish Journal of Archaeology (DJA)* aims to be among the foremost of its type in archaeological research and welcomes articles within its geographical and editorial framework from all, regardless of the authors' position.

The *Danish Journal of Archaeology* is therefore a deliberate name change from the *Journal of Danish Archaeology (JDA)* which was published between 1982 and 2006 and successfully sought to play a similar role. Despite the name change, *DJA* follows in *JDA*'s footsteps. The former facilitators and editors deserve thanks for completing 14 volumes, all of which were alongside their usual responsibilities. Then as now, collaboration between the archaeological museums and the universities lays behind the journal and now the Danish Agency for Culture has demonstrated its commitment to safeguarding the quality and internationalisation of archaeological research by ensuring a secure economic basis for the *Danish Journal of Archaeology* for its first four years.

The range of the editorial team and their desire to encompass a wide variety of archaeological topics, both geographical and professional, will be a central characteristic. In addition, collaboration with an international publisher such as Taylor & Francis ensures a digital future for the *Danish Journal of Archaeology* and also for the published content of the *Journal of Danish Archaeology* which is already available online for all subscribers.

It is my hope that this initiative will prove its strength for many years to come, that past and future subscribers will continue their support and that the *Danish Journal of Archaeology* will grow and live.

*Crescat et vivat!*

Per Kristian Madsen  
Director General, National Museum of Denmark